Signs





Signs:

Signs add a lot to our models. Signs help to tell the story of the structure. They will date the structure, tell the purpose of the structure, can give directions and add color. There are difference types of sign, Billboards, sign that stand-alone or on the side of buildings. Paper poster signs and sign painted on the sides of building. Signs will help define the era you are modeling. Pick appropriate signs for your era if you are modeling the forties don' use sign for auto from the sixties. A lot of the early sign were made out of paper and put up like wallpaper so all your sign don' have to be in perfect shape. The signs peeled and faded and had new signs stuck over old signs.



There are hundreds of sources for sign to use in model railroading. The Internet has a lot of sites were you can copy signs for your use. Be careful when copping sign from the Internet make sure the sign don' have copyrights with their logo printed in light letters. A simple site is one that sells tin signs. The sign you are using don' have to be perfect most sign were faded with aged. Another great source is on the railroad Forums I know the RR Kit Forum has a listing of a lot of signs. There are companies that sell

Ghost Copyright

sheets of sign. They even sell CD with printable signs. You can find adds in old magazines or even sign in Model Railroader. If you need a personal sign you can make one on your computer. In this clinic we are going to cover Billboards, hand painted signs, signs painted on the sides of buildings, Stencil signs, signs in windows and sign made on your computer. All these sign can be stored on your computer and printed out when you need one.

Tip: Signs: If a kit comes with signs take the originals from the kit and copy them on a color copier and put the originals in a binder for later use. If you use an ink jet copier you will need to seal the signs with a clear acrylic spray

Stencil signs



Signs made with stencils are a nice way to make painted sign on walls but is time consuming making the stencil. They are great if you need more than one of the same sign. Some kits come with stencil for

sign. Here is the way I like to make stencil signs. First I paint my walls then I lightly weather it. I place the stencil on the wall were I want the sign. I place two pieces of blue painter tape on the top two corners and one on the bottom. I buy a couple of 3/8 stenciling brushes. And choose the color of my sign. I like to use acrylic craft paints they are easy to use and clean up and can be thinned with water. I use a dry brush technique. Put some paint on the stencil brush and wipe most of the paint off on a paper towel. I like to stipple the paint on. Stippling is a straight on stabbing motion with the brush. Start with a light coat of paint for faded sign. You can lift the tape from the bottom of the stencil to see if the sign is dark enough don' remove the top tape. If it' not dark enough stick it back down and stipple more paint on. Some time I will make a light faded sign then put another sign over parts of the faded sign. You may also use an airbrush to paint the letters. When the sign is done lightly weather the whole wall. The letter on old sign look like the paint is washing down the wall. A little weathering powder the color of the letters streaking down from the letters completes the look. Don' over do it.









Tip: For color chalk the same as your sign try a color pastel, sanded to a powder.

Tip: Stencil sign can be applied to the slanted roofs of building not just walls

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Paper poster signs



Paper poster sign are the easiest signs to make. The ones I like the most are circus and events sign. The nightclub or circus would paste up allover town. The competition was fierce to get the most sign up. One company would paste their signs over a competitor' sign and hope they don' get caught. Make a copy of the sign you want to use. You can make the sign larger or smaller, darker or lighter on most copiers. If you make the copy light it look like a faded sign. I cut the sign out with a new #11 exacto knife and a straight edge. To age some of my sign I make a light wash of acrylic craft paint Golden Brown and lightly brush it on the sign. Sometimes a light sanding with 440 grit sand paper will weather the sign. If I am putting multiple sign on one wall I will over lap the newer sign over the older ones. Curl up a few corners or tear a corner off. Put a little age to the signs. Remember these sign were not made to last.

Tip: Don' forget to add paper poster to your fences

Signs in windows



Most storefronts would put sign in their windows advertising their goods or what they do. In modeling the hard thing to do is getting the sign to stick to the window glazing and still keeping it clear. Print your sign the size you want on plain copier paper. One way is to sandwich the sign between two pieces of glazing. On my structures I use .005 clear sheet styrene for my glazing material. Place the sign were you want on the glazing. Take 00 paintbrush and dip it in **Tester liquid Plastic Cement** and touch it to the back of the paper sign. The cement will wick through the sign and stick it to the glazing perfectly clear. Do not use too much cement or you will craze the glazing.

Tip: If you have old decal and try to use then and they fall apart. Take the rest and make color copy of them and use them as paper signs. Or thin them for signs painted on walls

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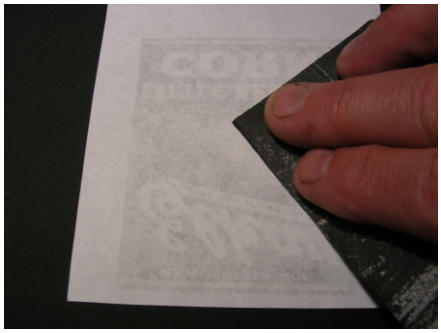
Signs painted on walls

If you want the signs to look like they are painted on the building there are two ways to get that look. Both ways rely on the paper sign to be as thin as possible. It' easier to apply sign to the walls when they are lying flat.

Signs tined by sanding



One way to thin out the sign is to sand the back of the sign. Start by lightly sanding & thinning your paper sign from it' back. Start in the middle and work out toward the edges. Put a piece of masking tape in the middle of the sign so you won' sand through the middle. The edges need to be the thinnest part of the sign. Use a sharp #11 blade to cut it away from its surrounding paper and apply white glue to it' entire back. Cover the sign with a piece of wax paper and press and burnish onto the wall. I use the rounded back of my tweezers to burnish the sign into the cracks in the wall.

After the signs have dried you may want to weather the sign. A light wash of light ink and alcohol brush on from the top to the bottom will age the sign. A little white weathering powder brushed over the sign will fade the colors on the sign but don' over do it. Dry brushing over the sign lightly top to bottom with the building color will help make the sign appear painted on the wall.





Tip: Put a piece of masking tape in the middle of the sign so you won' sand through the middle.

Signs printed on tissue paper

The next technique I learned from Mark Doyon. Start by copying the sign on a pain piece of copier paper. Leave the original in the copier. Take a piece of white tissue paper the kind used to wrap shirts and gifts and cut a piece big enough to cover the copied sign. Tape all around the edges of the tissue paper to the copier paper. Now run the paper back thru the copier so it prints on the tissue paper over the copied sign. When the tissue sign dries the sign needs to be sealed so the ink won' run. A clear acrylic spray will seal the sign. I like to use **Plaid' Clear Acrylic Sealer (Matte)** as my sealer. Spray two light coats on both sides of the signs. Use a X-acto knife with a new #11 blade and a straight edge to cut the sign as close as possible from tissue paper. Apply 50/50 diluted white glue with a brush to it' entire back. Be careful not to stretch the sign. Cover the sign with a piece of tissue paper and press and burnish onto the wall. Sometimes it helps to press on the tissue paper with your thumb. I use the rounded back of my tweezers to burnish the sign into the cracks in the wall. Ink jet printers won' print white if you want your sign to have a white background paint a white square on your wall and place your sign over the white square the white will show thru.

Sign printed on tissue paper *Sign printed on plain paper*





Tissue taped over copy of sign



After the signs have dried you may want to weather the sign. A light wash of light ink and alcohol (Go lightly with the alcohol) brush on from the top to the bottom will age the sign. A little white weathering powder brushed over the sign will fade the colors on the sign but don' over do it. Dry brushing over the sign lightly top to bottom with the building color will help make the sign appear painted on. These sign can be applied over Board siding, Clapboard, Brick, or stucco. Signs are applied the same way to all wall materials. Stucco you need to press and rub.

Sign on stucco

Tip: Most printers will require that you place the paper with the sign and tissue paper face down in the printer

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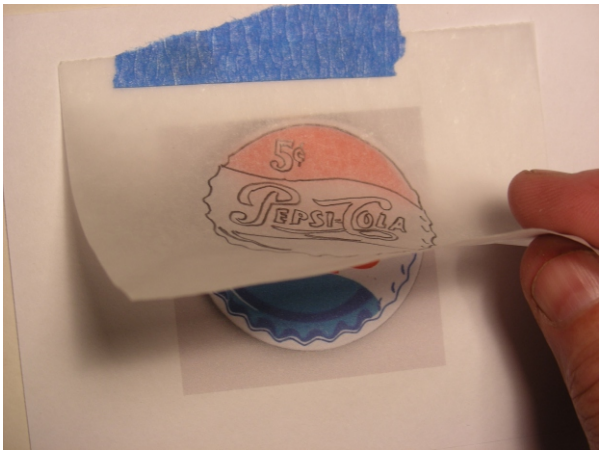
Sign on clapboard *Sign on Brick*

Tip: Make sure you get your signs straight on the wall the first time and don' stretch them.

Signs hand painted

Hand painted signs can be the hardest signs to make. The thing I like about hand painted sign is you can make them look almost wash out, which put age to the building.



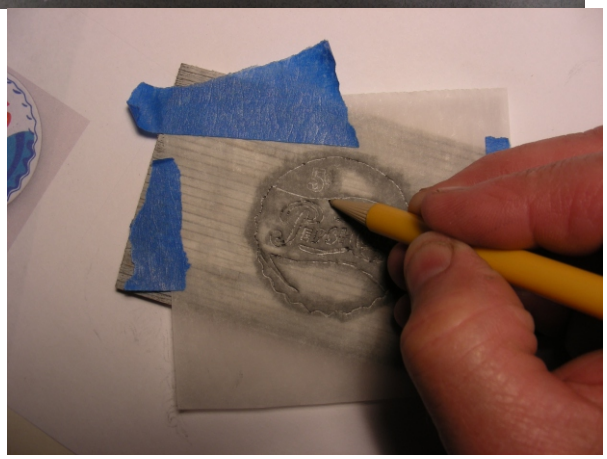


There is an easier way to make these signs. Pick a sign were the design is simple to start. Later work your way to more complicated designs. First print a picture of the sign you want to paint on piece of plain copier paper. Make sure it' the size you want. Next you need a piece of tracing paper and a #2 lead pencil. Tape a piece of tracing paper so the paper won' move over the picture of the sign. With the point of the pencil trace over the lines of the sign. You can lift the tracing and see if the tracing look like the sign

Signs

Tip: make sure the tracing paper is tape down well when tracing the sign and transferring tracing to the wall so it won' shift around.







After you have finished tracing the sign lift and check you have trace all the lines on the sign. Take the tracing paper off the sign and turn the tracing over. With the side of the lead on the pencil rub lead on the back of the tracing. Cover all the lines on the back of the tracing. Now paint and weather the wall you want the sign to go on. Tape down the tracing on the wall were you want it to go. With lead rubbing side down. Use three pieces of tape so the tracing won' move while you are transferring the line from the tracing. With the point of the pencil go over the lines on the front of the tracing. When you have completed all tracing lift one corner and see if the sign' lines have transferred to the wall. If they have you can take the tracing off the wall. If not retrace the lines that are missing. Now you have a pencil sketch of the sign on the wall. For small sign I like to use a 00 ,20, 30 Paint brushes. For the paint I use acrylic craft paints I can thin them with water for the wash out look. Now I' going to paint

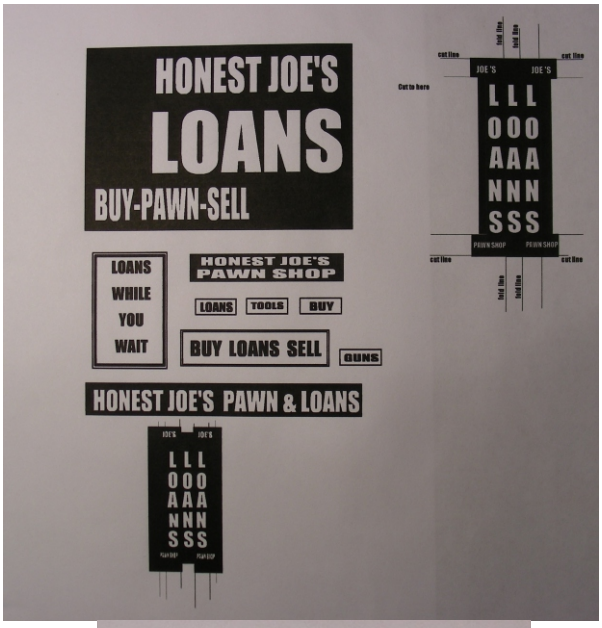
the sign just like it was a paint by numbers picture. By using my original sign as a guide I paint in the sign. Take your time. If it doesn' come out perfect don' worry you can wash out the sign anyway. To wash out the sign a little rubbing alcohol brush on from top to bottom will run the paint. Don' over do it.

Signs

Signs Made on the computer

Everybody needs personalize signs on their layout. Stores and businesses named after friends and loved ones. The computer is a way to make professional looking signs. I think the hardest part is coming up the design of the sign not making it. I design a lot of my sign in Microsoft Word. I also have a publishing program. There are many publishing program out there find one you like to work with. The way you make your design is up to the program you use. It' hard to define the steps it takes to make a sign with out knowing which program you would be using. Most publishing programs are not hard to use you will learn quickly, Sometimes I find a picture of a structure that I like but it has unique signs that need to be made. By looking at the signs in picture and comparing the letter I will choose a font that comes closest to the signs. Some signs I design for business that I think looks good (But not always do). I play with the design the color and the size till I think it looks right. Most publishing program come with clip art. Drawings and pictures you can use to illustrate your signs





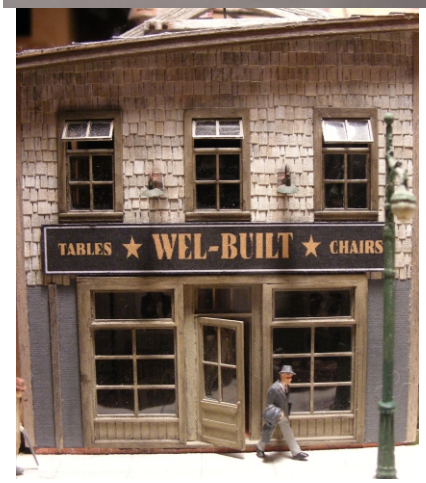


The simplest of all the signs is the black band with white or gold letters. Make a black rectangle and add the name of the business in white letters. Pick a font to use for your letters and draw a border around the band. You can have the reverse with white band with black letters. Ink jet printers won' print white if you want your sign to have a white background paint a white background on your wall and place your sign over the white Rectangle the white will show thru Once you have designed your sign you can print it on what ever you want paper, tissue paper or card stock. The signs you design on your computer have no limits The best way to learn is sit down at your computer start designing signs. Remember start simple and build your experience.

Tip: Most publishing programs are not hard to use you will learn quickly. Pick a sign were the design is simple to start. Later work your way to more complicated designs.

Signs





Black with gold letters

Some signs I have designed on my computer

Billboards



Billboards are just big sign. There are companies that make billboards out there but sometimes they just don' make the one you need or want. You can copy hundreds of billboards design from the Internet. Just make sure the billboard is appropriate for your time period. Billboards were printed on paper rolls and put up like wallpaper. Print your sign on plain copier paper then cut it into sections and glue each section leaving the last section half glued and half rolled with a person brushing it on. A great little scène. I print most of my billboards on cardstock. Don' forget when printing your signs if

you lighten up your print your sign will look faded.





Tip: A lot of billboards were attached to the sides of building not just paint on them.

Signs





A splash of color



Color in what a sign lends to a structure. Most structure are quite plain till the sign are added. This model has sign printed on paper, tissue and card stock

Paper

Tissue paper

Card stock

Paper



Signs

This clinic by no means is the end all about sign. These are some of the technique that I use you may use other. Sometimes by combining technique you come up with a whole new technique. Don' be afraid to experiment with new ideas. From the look of this building you can' have enough signs. Have fun with the signs they don' all have to be serous. I have added a few sign I found on the Internet to start the ideas flowing.

Does this sign look familiar
(Look on page 8)
You never know were an idea will come from

A few sign ideas

All these pictures are from the Internet




DRINK
Coca-Cola
Go refreshed


LOAN OFFICE
LOOK PROSPEROUS
MT. VERNON


F.G.PITZER
DRYGOODS —
NOTIONS
MILLINERY —
— CLOAKS
AND CARPETS —


"Red" LYON
JOIN THE SWING TO
PEPSI COLA
5¢









A few more sign ideas


WAYNE FEEDS
PEN FED BEEF
BAUGH'S
FERTILIZERS
WAYNE FEEDS
WE USE COOP
AMMYDROUS AMMONIA
BLAIR'S FEEDS
PLANT
PIONEER
DEKALB
FOR PROFITS
FEED STANDARD
CO-OP MEMBER
PROFESSIONAL pig mama
PURINA DOG CHOW
PFISTER HYBRIDS
PIONEER
NITRANA
FARMERS HYBRID
CORN
Polled Herefords
ALBERT McFERRON
We Sell PURINA CHOWS
STULL'S HYBRIDS SOLD HERE
Do Better with Doughboy Clinghood FEEDS
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OFFICE OUTFITTERS
SAFES CABINETS
OFFICE FURNITURE
FILING SUPPLIES
THE C.F. DENZER CO.


Columbia
Alpen
Brewing Co
Bräu
Bottled Beer
POST-DISPATCH
Petersens
ANNEX
BOTTLED
BEER
DRAUGHT
BEER
WHISKIES
Daily
and
Sunday


DRINK
Dr. Pepper
GOOD FOR LIFE!
10
2
4


The SPOT LUNCH
DINNERS & LUNCHES
ICE CREAM